

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Compsopogon coeruleus (Balbis) Montagne (Rhodophyta: Erythrotrichiaceae).
New record of this genus for Australia.

Samples of this alga were first collected in Australia by A. Pringle (5. 1977); it was then growing attached to mangrove roots in the Lane Cove River, which flows into Port Jackson, New South Wales. The collection site is on a bank opposite Redbank Oval. At the same site the alga was present in small numbers in October 1977, but formed large, coarse green mats in November 1977.

Further samples of this species were obtained from Hexham Swamps, northwest of Newcastle, N.S.W. on 13.12.1978, by W. McGregor.

Dr Dominie Cheng (pers. comm.) has also found *Compsopogon* in the Nepean River, just downstream of the old Camden Water Pollution Control Plant discharge.

According to Thaxter (1900) this genus characteristically occurs in fresh water, but may occur in tidal water that is practically fresh. This description also applies to the locations cited from Australia. Smith (1950) records that in Arizona *C. coeruleus* may grow in such profusion in irrigation ditches as to be a nuisance.

Regarding the species of this genus Thaxter (1900) says "few of them appear to be distinguished by characters that might not be included in the variation of a single species". I take a similar view in regarding *C. oishii* Okamura (Okamura 1915) as being a synonym of *C. coeruleus*.

Fritsch (1945, p. 438) states that *Compsopogon* is widely distributed, and he considers, as do Colley (in Collins 1916) and Smith (1950), that its distribution is likely to have been extended owing to its introduction by shipping or by the importing of plants. This view is supported by the relatively recent report of this genus from New Zealand (Chapman and Cameron, (1967)) and particularly by the report by Zaneveld et al. (1976) of the occurrence of this species in an aquarium in Czechoslovakia. The latter paper also cites earlier records of the genus in aquaria in Germany.

C. coeruleus has been recorded from Algeria, Japan, the Antilles, Sumatra, and the U.S.A. as far north as Woods Hole, Massachusetts, (Collins 1916, De Toni 1924, Okamura 1915, Smith 1950) but the genus does not appear to have been recorded previously from Australia.

The cited specimens are preserved at the National Herbarium of N.S.W. (NSW).

References

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Manuscript accepted 30.7.1979

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